



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

**Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning**

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

The Nadia J. Pagan School

Elementary School X226

**1950 Sedgwick Avenue
Bronx
NY 10453**

Principal: Gloria Darden

**Date of review: March 31, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Maria Giacone**

The School Context

P.S. 226 The Nadia J. Pagan School is an elementary school with 514 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 23% Black, 76% Hispanic, 0% White, and 0% Asian students. The student body includes 25% English language learners and 20% special education students. Boys account for 51% of the students enrolled and girls account for 49%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 93.8%.

School Quality Criteria

Instructional Core		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	Area of:	Rating:
1.1 Ensure engaging, rigorous, and coherent curricula in all subjects, accessible for a variety of learners and aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and/or content standards	Celebration	Proficient
1.2 Develop teacher pedagogy from a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best that is informed by the instructional shifts and Danielson Framework for Teaching, aligned to the curricula, engaging, and meets the needs of all learners so that all students produce meaningful work products	Focus	Proficient
2.2 Align assessments to curricula, use on-going assessment and grading practices, and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom levels	Additional Findings	Proficient
School Culture		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	Area of:	Rating:
3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students, and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations	Additional Findings	Proficient
Systems for Improvement		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	Area of:	Rating:
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning	Additional Findings	Proficient

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:

1.1 Curriculum

Rating:

Proficient

Findings

Curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and teachers consistently emphasize higher-order skills for all learners across grades and content areas.

Impact

All students, including English language learners and students with disabilities, consistently engage in higher-level tasks and teachers provide supports to enable them to access those tasks, thereby leading to college and career readiness.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders and faculty consistently examine and revise GO Math! and ReadyGEN along with Teachers College curricula to ensure alignment to the Common Core Learning Standards and meet the needs of their students. In math, teachers have adjusted pacing guides based on key standards. Grade 5 teachers revised the pacing guide to provide students with additional time for division. In literacy, the grade 4 and 5 teachers adjusted the sequence of units to ensure that they taught the study of complex text prior to the state examination.
- Purposely designed curricula promote coherence by ensuring vertical alignment of instruction. Kindergarten students integrated sources of information in literacy. In grade 2, they navigated nonfiction text and used its features for research. In grade 4 students supported details in a nonfiction narrative text in English language arts, and in social studies they determined importance and identified key details in reading biographies.
- A review of lesson plans reveals that planning includes higher order questions and tasks. A grade 3 math plan included the question, "How would you solve a word problem where the amount of friends exceeds the amount of cookies being shared?" A grade 2 plan included the question, "How does the author support the idea that bats are adaptable?" A plan for a self-contained grade 2/3 special education class included the task, "Explain how drawing a diagram can help when solving length problems."
- Curricular scaffolds for English language learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities to help them access rigorous work are embedded in curricular documents. In a unit lesson for kindergarten, photographs related to a text explain the concepts of "long ago" and "today". A grade 5 unit on complex text indicates strategies for ELLs that include identifying clues in the text with illustrations, the use of iPads for sample texts online, and an increased amount of discussion about the text. The same unit includes supports for students with disabilities, which include presenting information in more than one modality, breaking assignments into smaller steps that can be completed one task at a time, and time for students to work in small groups with a teacher for additional support.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Proficient

Findings

While pedagogy provides consistent instructional supports, including questioning and discussion techniques, the use of strategic entry points and extensions that foster deep reasoning in student work products varies across the school.

Impact

Across classrooms, curricular extensions support students to produce meaningful work products, yet there are missed opportunities for all students to take ownership of their learning.

Supporting Evidence

- The school has placed a focus on the workshop model through the lens of the gradual release of responsibility of Fisher and Frey as a way for students to enter into a lesson. The strategy calls for the steps “I do; we do together; you do together; you do alone.” This strategy was evident in classrooms visited. In a grade 3 math lesson relating fractions to whole numbers, the teacher demonstrated, then the class did a problem together as a whole group which was debriefed when students presented their number line and other students responded as to whether they agreed and why. One student said, “Now I changed my thinking because $\frac{4}{4}$ would be the right fraction.” Then students proceeded to work with their partners.
- Across classrooms visited, teachers employed a variety of supports to provide entry points into the lesson including charts, visuals, student groupings, use of the Smart board, manipulatives, and discussion. However, teachers unevenly executed supports across classrooms. For example, students in a grade 1 class wrote about and drew the animal from a story they had read. There was a diagram on the board, but students could not explain the connection between the diagram and their writing. In a grade 3 literacy lesson on identifying causes and effects of pollution, ELLs were grouped together to do a different lesson on message, theme and opinion and thus did not address the lesson of the day on cause and effect.
- Across most classrooms, students engaged in small group and partner discussions. However, in some classrooms, discussions were limited to teacher questions directed at individual students or to brief “turn and talk” activities. In a grade 2/3 self-contained class, questioning was teacher to individual students in a whole group setting. In a grade 2 class, turn and talk where the teacher directed peers to discuss each other’s story beginnings yielded few substantive responses. One student asked a peer, “So you like how I restated?” The peer’s response was, “Yeah, I like how you completed, too.” In these cases, there were missed opportunities to direct students to engage in deeper thinking, probing, and questioning themselves and each other so that all students, including the school’s subgroups, could take ownership of their learning.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:

2.2 Assessment

Rating:

Proficient

Findings

Across the school, teachers use common assessments and rubrics to gauge student progress and provide actionable feedback. Teachers use ongoing checks for understanding to adjust instruction.

Impact

The school's systems to monitor progress through common assessments as well as during instruction guide adjustments that meet all students' learning needs.

Supporting Evidence

- Across the school, rubrics and checklists provide feedback to students and teachers regarding student achievement so that they know how to plan and check their work. Students spoke about using teacher feedback based on rubrics to learn how to improve. One student said, "I can analyze and bring out a thesis statement." Another student said, "I can use linking words to connect opinions with reasons."
- Feedback provided to students is actionable. In response to a grade 3 student's persuasive piece, one teacher wrote to a student, "Next time, include a 'call to action' in your conclusion as you make a suggestion and tell the audience what they can do to stop the problem." The student's revised piece shows implementation of the suggestion. In response to a grade 3 math piece, another teacher wrote, "Next time, use more math vocabulary such as factor, product, equation, to help show what you know / don't know and explain your work." In response to a grade 1 student's work the teacher wrote, "Next time, add punctuation to the ends of sentences" and gave an example of a sentence with a colored marker to mark the period. The student revised the piece by adding periods to the ends of his sentences with a marker.
- Students engage in peer reflection. One student wrote to a peer, "Make sure you have relevant details that match your opinion." Students spoke about feedback they had received from their peers. One student said his friend advised him to use sentences that are more complex. Another said her friend told her she had not used appropriate text evidence.
- Students engage in self-reflection. One grade 5 student reflected about her piece on "Trail of Tears", stating, "I was able to generate sub-headings that connected to my essay by using (the teacher's) model as a guide. (I still need help with) varying the length of my sentences and reread for proper word endings".
- Teachers use various checks for understanding including taking notes, circulating and pausing to address issues as they arise. In a grade 3 class, the teacher paused the class after circulating to ask students to remind themselves, "Do I know what the question is asking me? Look at both questions." In a grade 4 class, while students worked on a task involving close reading of text, the teacher stopped students' independent work to review the task, "What are we looking for in question two?" After eliciting responses from students and clarifying the task, she summarized, "We're going to be analyzing."

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

High expectations are consistently communicated to staff via the use of the Danielson Framework for Teaching and professional development opportunities. Ongoing communication and performance updates keep families apprised of student progress.

Impact

The school has established a collaborative culture among staff, students and families that fosters high expectations for all learners, leading to student progress towards college and career readiness.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders communicate high expectations to staff through the staff handbook, and a weekly “FYI” to teachers that reiterates the school-wide foci of writing, discussion and the gradual release model of instruction. Professional learning opportunities that include learning walks support the expectations. Written communication also includes expectations for the use of the Smart board, “talk moves”, the mini-lesson, and lesson components including “non-negotiables” for planning using the Danielson Framework for Teaching with a suggested lesson plan template. There are also written expectations for cluster teachers, educational assistants, school aides and for collaborative team teaching.
- School leadership holds teachers accountable for meeting expectations as evidenced through feedback on lesson observations that refer to the instructional foci and resources for continued growth. One comment reads, “...you could have students work in pairs to answer the questions instead of...probing them.” A comment to another teacher read, “You asked many questions in your lesson that fostered...answers, however, there was limited building on or discussion amongst students” with a reference to a website.
- School leadership and staff regularly communicate with families regarding school-wide expectations and their children’s progress. Parents received a letter outlining routines, classroom expectations, and a homework-scoring guide. The parent handbook includes parent/guardian, student, and teacher responsibilities and is available in Spanish. Progress reports include topics, test results, and strategies parents can work on at home. Student data reports include reading levels, writing and math scores with teacher comments and room for parent comments. The school provides parents with a calendar of informational sessions for Tuesday parent meetings by grade so they can receive information as well as tips for helping their children. The grade 4 parent sessions include topics such as Math Strategies to Support Your Children, Using Higher-Order Questioning to Move my Children through Reading Levels, and Using Your Child’s Feedback to Support their Writing.
- Parents spoke about how they are kept apprised of what their children are learning and the progress they are making through frequent reports. They referred to parent newsletters for each grade that tell them unit topics with helpful websites to visit with their children. They spoke about workshops and materials on the Common Core Standards. One parent said, “My child was two levels behind in the beginning. The teacher suggested books my child would like. Now she’s more engaged.” Another parent said, “They take the time to go to the parents. They know us and our kids, not just on the surface.”

Quality Indicator:	4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

Teacher teams are engaged in examining student work through inquiry-based professional collaborations to promote the implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards and enhance teacher practice. Distributed leadership structures enable teachers to have a voice in key decisions across the school.

Impact

The work of teacher teams is improving teacher practice and providing teachers with a stronger voice in key decisions affecting student achievement.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers of the grade 4 inquiry team spoke about how the team generates strategies that influence and strengthen pedagogy across the grade. To assist students in writing a short response requiring evidence from text, they created an exemplar model. In the model, each sentence was underlined in a specific color to designate strategies for an effective response, including, “I turned the question around” in blue, “I answered the question in my own words” in orange, “I analyzed based on details found in the text” in yellow, and “I included text evidence to support my response” in green.
- Teacher teams utilize protocols to examine student work and trends exhibited by a selected group of students to determine challenges and ways to address them on a grade. For example, the grade 4 inquiry team examined student work that required them to analyze text in order to respond to a key question using at least two examples from the text. Using the consultancy protocol, they saw that with the aid of an exemplar model that had been color-coded, students had improved their use of text evidence, but that some ideas were not connected. Some student responses were too literal, copying the text and not going deeper. One teacher observed, “Our concentration is all on detail (and) analysis fell by the wayside.” Collectively, teachers determined several classroom strategies to improve student analysis and writing that included more discussion to generate and connect ideas, and putting a greater emphasis on analysis in instructional planning.
- Teachers spoke about having a voice in key decisions that affect student learning. The School Development Committee is responsible for determining the professional development calendar to meet teachers’ needs and address the school-wide instructional foci. Teachers make curricular decisions. Grade 1 teachers determined that students needed more time on the unit on place value. They redesigned lessons to extend time while still completing the whole grade curriculum. In literacy, one teacher explained, “We were doing complex text too late in the third grade, so we moved units around to introduce it earlier.” Teachers also examined Academic Intervention Services (AIS) and saw the need to change the type of questions asked to increase the level of rigor. Instead of asking students to retell a story, prompts asked students to change the title and explain why they chose the new title by explaining what in the story made the new title appropriate.